



The Virginia Saltwater Review

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by

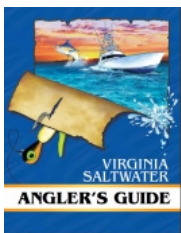
Department of Plans and Statistics, Fisheries Management Division

OVERVIEW

After a two week hiatus due to State Fair of Virginia, the Saltwater Review is back to wind down another season of fishing reports during the month of October.

It's officially fall fishing season in Virginia, and so far, several species have cooperated, including spot, red drum and flounder. The striped bass season has just begun, and anglers are already beginning to see the first stripers of the season.

There is an Emergency Closure of the recreational fishery for black sea bass in federal waters (3 miles to 200 miles offshore), effective this past Monday, October 5, 2009. The closure applies to all federal waters north of Cape Hatteras, N.C., for 180 days in response to recent landing data that showed recreational fishermen may catch more than double their annual quota by the end of the year.



We are also pleased to announce that the 2009 edition of the Saltwater Anglers Guide is now available online at http://www.mrc.virginia.gov/vswft/Angler_Guide/index.shtm. This useful document includes guides and tips to Virginia fishing, and overview of many of VMRC's programs, facilities lists, and a fish identification guide. The guide has been divided into individual sections to increase download speeds. A link to the full guide is at the bottom of the table of contents. Because of state funding constraints, a printed version of this guide is not currently available.



We are pleased to announce a new location for those wishing to participate in VMRC's Marine Sportfish Collection Project, the Virginia Beach Fishing Center (www.virginiafishing.com). As we begin to expand our operations to support an ODU study on specific tilefish and grouper species that will begin in the near future, the addition of the Virginia Beach Fishing Center is greatly enhance our biological collection program. Already, we can count on deepwater species donations from Wallace's Bait and Tackle in

Hampton, Long Bay Pointe Marina in Virginia Beach and Chris' Bait and Tackle in Capeville, and we expect that will continue as we head toward the 2010 fishing season. Special thanks goes out to the Recreational Fishing Advisory Board members who approved our third year of funding for this beneficial project (see page 7 for more details). We are currently reordering and restocking our shelves with reward items, and hope to distribute overdue rewards for those that have participated in the late summer, through September, within the next few weeks. Thank you to all participants for their patience during this process.



In addition, the Recreational Fishing Advisory Board approved a one-time funding request for materials in support of VMRC's Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program. A joint project with our inland brethren (DGIF), staff is happy to report that this project continues to draw frequent requests for information from both individuals and municipalities. Just in the last two months, staff has deployed 12 monofilament fishing line bins with the City of Newport News and Lancaster County. Overall, over 75 pounds of monofilament fishing line has been collected by VMRC staff. See page 9 for more details on this project, and remember, instead of throwing away that monofilament line, find a nearby recycling collection site and donate it.

THE FISHING REPORT

Chincoteague

Donna, at Captain Bob's, reports little action around Chincoteague this week. Dogfish and snapper bluefish were found around the area, and flounder were biting at the wrecks in around the island last week. There are a lot of undersized black sea bass in the water around Chincoteague as well.

Cape Charles

Staff at Chris' Bait and Tackle report sea mullet and spot catches. Flounder fishing has been slow, but a few were biting off of Cape Charles and Kiptopeke. Sea mullet were found near Buoy 18, and spot catches were reported from the sea side out of Wise Point. Speckled trout fishing has been hit and miss on the sea-side and bay-side creeks. Little striped bass action has been reported yet, but large red drum and puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are plentiful on the surf side.

According to Ernie at Cherrystone Bait and Tackle, speckled trout were running well in the mouths of Plantation and Hungars Creeks. They have been reported up to 5 pounds. Croaker fishing and crabbing has started to wane, and striped bass have yet to appear.

Captain Ray Cardone, of Cherrystone, reported that flounder fishing is beginning to pick up again as water temperatures cool. Several large flounder (26 to 28 inches) were reported in the catches.

Lower Bay/Bridge Tunnel

Striped bass have not arrived at Cobb's Marina yet; however, there were reports of flounder catches around the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

According to staff at Salt Ponds Marina, several boats reported small spot and flounder. On October 1st,

two flounder citations (7 pounds, 5 ounces, 26 inches) were reported from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

Spot is the main catch in the waters near the York River Fishing Center. While anglers are finding them throughout the area and the piers, the mouth of Sarah's Creek has been the prime location.

Ken Neill, of the Peninsula Anglers Club and IGFA representative, contributed the following:

The Grafton Fishing Supply/Peninsula Salt Water Sport Fisherman's Association Spot Tournament was held on October 3rd and 4th. The weather was perfect, and the spot were plentiful if not overly large. Most of the tournament fish were caught at the Monitor Merrimac Bridge Tunnel, the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, and in the York River near Sarah's Creek. Spot fishing has also been good in Rudee and Lynnhaven Inlets and in the Rappahannock River. Croaker are still being caught pretty much everywhere, though they are starting to school up to head to the mouth of the bay. Some of the largest croaker are being caught around hard structures like the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and at the Cell. Flounder are biting aggressively. They are along the edge of Hampton Bar, around Back River Reef, along the Baltimore Channel at the mouth of the bay, at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and some are being caught around coastal structure like the Tower Reef and the Brass Spike. Striped bass fishing consists mostly of smaller fish up in the shallows, along any of the area bridges, and at night around any light source. Any dock can be a striped bass hot spot. Some larger striped bass can be caught by chunking at the Monitor Merrimac Bridge Tunnel and the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel. Live bait is producing some larger fish over the tubes of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Historically, this is a good time to catch some nice gray trout. There are plenty of small bluefish around in the same areas the striped bass are hanging out. The speckled trout bite is heating up as the waters cool. Both puppy drum (juvenile red drum) and speckled trout are providing action inside the inlets, up on Poquoson Flats, and in Back and York Rivers. Medium-sized reds are schooled around the islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Large red drum are being caught along Sandbridge. Tautog are starting to show more activity at bay structures like Back River Reef, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and the Cape Henry Wreck. Trigger fish can be caught on the coastal wrecks. The Santore, the Tiger, and the 4A Drydock are good wrecks to try. Some spadefish are still hanging around these areas, though they are not very interested in eating. Black sea bass are plentiful, but the federal government has closed recreational sea bass fishing in federal waters. All of these fish must be released until sometime in the spring. Offshore fishing is a good mix-bag fishery out of Virginia. The white marlin bite remains strong though nothing like the crazy pace of the past month. Wahoo are a common catch along with tuna and dolphin. Overnight boats are encountering some swordfish. Yellowfin, blackfin, and bigeye tuna are being caught in good numbers out of Oregon Inlet. The wahoo bite is very good out of Hatteras Inlet.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

Folks are getting in the mood for the fall fishing trend, and the fish are cooperating when anglers can reach them. The species gaining the most attention right now is spot. As little as they are, spot are causing a big ruckus. The lower Bay is still loaded with decent sized spot, with many fish pushing to almost a pound. Lynnhaven and Rudee Inlets, the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel are productive areas for anglers using bloodworms and Fishbites. Serious spot chasers are still holding their breath for a long overdue run of citation

yellowbellies this year. In the meantime, folks are content bailing spot as fast as they can go.

Striped bass season debuted in the Bay this week. Anglers targeting rockfish (striped bass) are finding some success casting to schoolies ranging up to 28 inches near the islands, tubes, and pilings of the lower Bay bridge tunnels, especially at night along the light lines. Plenty of snapper bluefish are also in the mix. Presenting live bait over the tubes can result in decent rockfish to about 15 pounds. Wire liners and chunkers are also scoring with fewer, but bigger fish in the same class range. For now, anglers can keep two fish per person ranging from 18 inches to 28 inches, with no fish to be kept within the closed slot size from 28 to 34 inches. One of the two fish may exceed 34 inches.

Flounder are becoming more active in the lower Bay as they prepare for their migration offshore for the winter. This is the best time of year for drifters, who are catching good numbers of big flatfish while sweeping the edges of shoals and channels with strip bait. The Hampton Bar is the hot spot this week. The 1st Island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, the southern Small Boat Channel, and the Baltimore and Thimble Shoals Channels are also producing decent hauls. Some nice flounder are also covering near shore and offshore wrecks. Big sea bass are also available on these same offshore wrecks, but you cannot keep them until spring. Nice trigger fish and tautog are also available in the same areas. The best tautog hauls are coming from inside the Chesapeake Bay right now, where good numbers fish up to six pounds are falling for crab and fiddlers along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

It's hard not to notice the incredible red drum bonanza taking place all over the lower Bay and along the shorelines. Surf and pier anglers are taking big bulls from the Little Island Fishing Pier and from the beaches on cut bait. Some of these fish are measuring over 50 inches long. A few boats are also having luck with the reds while fishing close to the beach, casting to schools and fishing on the bottom.

Cobia are making a final showing along the Virginia Beach ocean front, where fish up to 70 pounds are jumping on live bait.

The Fishing Center reports that folks are catching tons of spot and a few keeper-sized speckled trout and puppy drum inside Rudee Inlet this week. The speckled trout bite is picking up as anglers partake in good-size fish with many topping 22 inches within bayside creeks and inlets. Fish over seven pounds are coming from both Lynnhaven and Little Creek Inlets lately, where Mirrolures are the lure of choice. Puppy drum (juvenile red drum) are still going strong within the lower Bay shallows, flats, inlets, and the Elizabeth River, with solid action happening on cut bait.

Big croaker are still thrilling hardhead anglers all over the lower bay. Fish weighing up to 2.5 pounds are coming from near the entrance buoys to Lynnhaven, the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, the 3rd island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and near Fort Story.

Reports of king mackerel in open waters are teasing die-hard king mackerel hunters. Expect schools of false albacore to overrun the Light Tower and inshore areas, offering trollers and casters a sporting fight. Amberjack are still circling the South Tower and a few offshore wrecks, with the

Triangle Wrecks providing good action recently.

On the offshore scene, trollers found a smattering of yellowfin tuna recently up to 70-pounds near the Triple O's. Some white marlin are still around, and wahoo are on the upswing. Plenty of bailer and gaffer dolphin are still a sure bet. Swordfish will draw more interest as the waters begin to cool.

Virginia Middle Bay

Staff at Jett's Hardware reported numerous small spot, most of which were used for live bait for striped bass fishing. Most of the catches were centered on Smith Point Jetty. Bluefish were also mixed in the catches.

Lewis, at Garrett's Marina, reports that striped bass catches are beginning. Anglers trolling near the towers have been finding the first striped bass of the season. Some bottom fishermen have found some pan-sized trout as well.

Kathy, at Locklies Marina reports from Carter's Creek, to Butler's Hole, to the mouth of the Rappahannock, folks have been pulling in everything from spot and croaker, to Spanish mackerel and striped bass. Over the last week, spot fishing remains dominant, with boats on trailers leaving with full coolers.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, reported the following:

Large spot have been biting well for much of the past week. They are available in the Rappahannock near Urbanna, at Butler's Hole, and at the Spike (3R). The waters off Gwynn Island (23 to 28 feet deep) have also produced well. The fish are biting on bloodworms and Fish Bites. There are still some big croaker moving down the Rappahannock River. Opening day striped bass fishermen did best if they chummed near structures where schoolie stripers were available on eels, small spot, and cut menhaden. Schoolie bluefish are mixed in the chum line and are being caught by trollers targeting striped bass. Stripers are also being caught by light tackle fishermen along shore structure in creeks and along river banks.

Virginia Beach

At the Virginia Beach Fishing Center, spot were reported in the inlet, and bloodworms and artificial bloodworms have been the bait of choice. Nice speckled trout were reported with two citations (5.5 pounds and 7.5 pounds). Several other large speckled trout were very close to citation size. A few anglers hooked flounder and puppy drum. Inshore, Spanish mackerel, taylor bluefish, red drum, and cobia were biting, while offshore, yellowfin tuna, dolphin, wahoo, and white marlin rounded out the catches. Staff is expecting to see the first swordfish of the season any day now.

Virginia Piers

Numerous phone calls to the Buckroe Pier staff in Hampton resulted in nothing more than busy signals this week, so we hope that means that the pier staff are so overwhelmed by fish coming in that they were calling for assistance.

At the Ocean View Pier, anglers are catching a few spot and puppy drum of good sizes.

Numerous puppy drum, nice spot, some croaker, taylor bluefish, and a few flounder were caught at the Lynnhaven Pier last week.

Numerous spot and nice-sized croaker were reported at the Virginia Beach Pier, along with pompano, sea mullet, and small bluefish.

At the Little Island Fishing Pier, at Sandbridge, anglers hooked red drum and puppy drum (juvenile red drum) recently.

Outer Banks, NC

Offshore fishing out of Oregon Inlet has been average for this time of year with dolphin, wahoo, and amberjack leading the way. Other species included tuna and Atlantic bonito. Billfish catches have dropped off to low levels, and those 15 to 20 miles offshore experienced slow fishing as well with only a few king mackerel to show for their efforts. Artificial reefs were holding sheepshead, tautog, triggerfish, spadefish, and black drum. Near shore, red drum were biting just outside the breakers. Surf fishermen were also catching red drum along with sea mullet, spot, and croaker. Speckled trout, red drum, and flounder headlined the inshore fishing. Speck fishing was the best during the early morning and late afternoon around the bridges. Red drum were in Oregon Inlet, and flounder could be found in the shallows.

The surf fishing south of Oregon Inlet has been very strong with large red drum down at the Point. Bluefish were also in the mix. Sea mullet and spot were reported along the north beach area up to Ramp 43.

Fishing out of Hatteras Inlet was slow due to strong winds during the last few days. When fishing was possible, dolphin, wahoo, and blackfin tuna were biting. Inshore fishing produced puppy drum last week.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.











ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.*

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM	TAUTOG
				
KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	TILEFISH (BLUELINE OR GOLDEN)	WRECKFISH, SNOWY GROUPER, WARSAW GROUPER	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
				

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)
Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)
Virginia Beach Fishing Center (Virginia Beach)**



ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

Get Hooked!
Report at
www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and

type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

Virginia Marine Resources Commission
Recreational Fishing Online Reporting



Recreational Saltwater Fishing

Welcome Jgrist,

Red Drum Reports are Needed!

We are collecting length data from red drum that anglers catch-and-release. In 2009, there will be a coastwide (Virginia to Florida) stock assessment of the red drum population, and information is lacking on the catch-and-release of red drum outside of the management slot limit (18 to 26 inches).

New 2008 Tautog Regs

Closed Season	May 1 through June 24
Minimum Size Limit	14 inches
Possession Limit	4 per person

June 16, 2008

Members: 1,457
Trips: 295
Catches: 3,941

Introducing the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

- Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for:
 - fish
 - birds
 - marine mammals
 - boaters and swimmers
- Deposit used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers!



VMRC-Managed

Locations!*

Ocean View Fishing Pier, Norfolk
Long Bay Pointe Marina, Virginia Beach
Buckroe Fishing Pier, Hampton
Chris' Bait and Tackle, Cape Charles
Capt. Bob's Marina, Chincoteague
Wallace's Bait and Tackle, Hampton
Don's Bait and Tackle, Wachapreague



***DGIF manages other locations throughout Virginia**

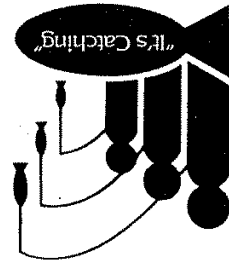
The Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program is run jointly by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries with support from the Boat US Foundation.

If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new container locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or email alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov.



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FISHERIES PLANS/STATISTICS OFFICE
VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION
2600 WASHINGTON AVE., 3RD FLOOR
NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA 23607

Practice

CAREFUL CATCH

REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH

Exhaustion * Loss of Slime * Wounds * Time out of Water